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10 March 1965

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Newspaper Spark

1. The publication in question is clearly Communist-inspired; in fact its very title is the English equivalent for Iskra, a newspaper edited by Lenin during his years as an expatriate Bolshevik revolutionary. For information on the ownership of Spark and other details concerning its background, we suggest reference to the FBI, which has responsibility for coverage of the domestic Communist movement.

2. The content of this issue of Spark is of course reflective of the current world-wide Communist propaganda effort to portray the United States as the aggressor in Vietnam and as guilty of unmentionable atrocities working through its South Vietnamese puppets. It will be recalled that a similar effort was made during the Korean War centering on the completely unfounded charges that the United States was engaging in "germ warfare." The stakes being what they are in Vietnam, a campaign of this sort is inevitable, and the Communists can be expected to use such outlets as are available to them in the United States to attempt to influence American opinion.

3. While we do not keep records on the US domestic press, we believe that most of the pictures have indeed appeared in more legitimate newspapers and magazines. Some have been distributed by news services such as the Associated Press. What the editors of Spark have done is to juxtapose them with captions which have no connection with the

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pictures themselves, are distorted, and quoted out of context. The Department of Defense and the Federal Bureau of Investigation may have more detailed information on the pictures and the captions.

4. There is little question but that torture is employed at times by the Vietnamese army--as by other Asian and African armies--in seeking to extract information from captured Viet Cong. The "water cure" depicted in one picture, in particular, is believed to be used with some frequency. The United States does not use these methods, nor do US advisors condone them. These advisors, however, have no authority over, nor responsibility for, Vietnamese troops.

5. In view of the large contingent of American journalists and photographers now in Vietnam, it is inevitable that pictures of the sort reproduced in Spark will be published in the United States. While the actions portrayed in these pictures are lamentable, their extensive dissemination in American information media gives in our view a distorted impression as to the prevalence of the practice of torture by the Vietnamese army. In any event, the systematic employment of terror by the Viet Cong, for which few pictures are available, seems to us to be of greater significance than the third degree methods used by the Vietnamese military in the field to extract tactical information.

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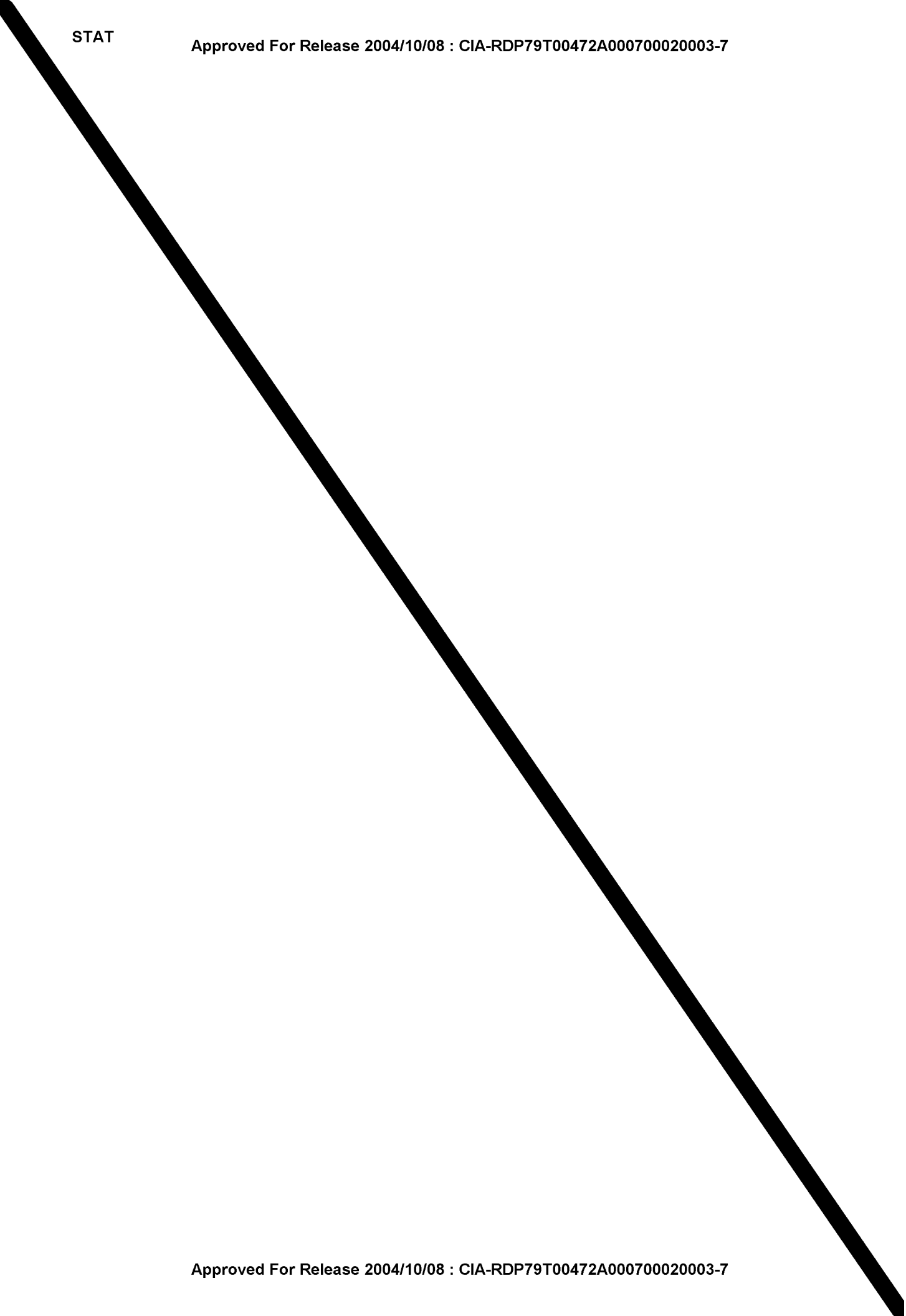

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